

**Vice Chancellor, I have the honour to present, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, Nicholas Roland Leybourne Haysom.**

On 21<sup>st</sup> April 1952, a certain Mrs Finkelstein gave birth to a beautiful, healthy baby boy. However, when the baby was brought to her room, he was not the baby that she was expecting at all. He had blue eyes and blond hair and was most definitely not her baby. She protested. The mistake was discovered. Her own baby was found. The imposter baby was returned to his own mother, Mrs Haysom. Mrs Haysom took her baby home, still wearing his Finkelstein label, and thus was born the name that has really stuck – Fink Haysom.

Despite that accidental imposter beginning, Fink Haysom has carved a career focussed on authenticity- starting as a student leader and lawyer in South Africa and becoming a global peacemaker and mediator.

As a student leader, he was hardly ever in class being more concerned with resuscitating the dying National Union of South African Students. Happily, NUSAS survived – at least in his time - and Haysom, despite his scanty lecture attendance, successfully graduated as a lawyer. As a founding partner of Cheadle, Thompson and Haysom, one of the most prominent labour and human rights law firms in South Africa, he continued his quest by challenging apartheid using the courts and the law.

In the South African transition, he was a negotiator, legal advisor and technical expert for CODESA and the ANC's Constitutional Commission. But for him, it was much more than just public service. In his own words: "Constitution making is rich and cerebral. It was a privilege to take a country that had been so divided and to forge a common destiny, based on shared values."

As Legal Advisor to President Mandela, Haysom was one of the most important members of the Office of the President. Mandela was famously hard to advise, but Haysom's astute approach was not to stage-manage. He said: "people trust and believe in Mandela because what he says comes from the heart and not from a political advisor – that's what allows him to govern with such authority."

Since then, Haysom has stepped very firmly into the global arena, firstly as an international advisor in the Burundi and Sudanese peace talks, then as leader of the constitutional support team in Iraq and now as Political Director in the Office of the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Constitution-making and peace-making have no blueprints. But Haysom has become adept at these challenging and creative processes. He has made a name for himself as the master of forging consensus between warring parties, breaking impossible deadlocks and "borrowing shamelessly" from any constitutions and processes that might assist the cause.

According to his old Professor Denis Davis – "Fink was always destined for a bigger stage" - with his ability to think things through, his sense of the bigger picture and his long-standing commitment to legal and social justice."

Despite his accidental imposter beginnings, he set about pursuing truth and justice and has done so for over 35 years. He has become internationally recognised for his vision, his masterful skills and his authenticity.

(If Mrs Finkelstein were here today, she'd be very proud.)

**Vice Chancellor, I have the honour to invite you to admit to the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, Nicholas Roland Leybourne Haysom.**

1. Cullinan, M.-A., *Personal Communication*, 24 November 2012.
2. Corder, H., *Personal Communication*, 4 December 2012.
3. Haysom, N., *Personal Communication*, 5 December 2012.
4. Mail and Guardian. 1995. *The people behind the Mandela machine*. 12 May 1995; Available from: <http://mg.co.za/article/1995-05-12-the-people-behind-the-mandela-machine>.
5. Lauria, J., 2012. *Sharing knowledge without blueprints*, . Launch of IDEA's : A Practical Guide to Constitution Building, International IDEA, **12 March 2012**.
6. Davis, D., *Personal Communication*, 5 December 2012.